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This fund is \$20,000, and of its income three quarters  
shall be spent for books and one quarter  
be added to the principal.

29 Nov. 1886.

Papers of D. D. Shakespeare

Time in the Play

BY EDWARD P. V.

Letter From J. C. Halliwell

Once Used Words in

JAMES DAY BY

PRICE ON 30

THE SHAKESPEARE SOCIETY  
HARVARD UNIVERSITY  
LONDON

## PUBLICATIONS ALREADY ISSUED.

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# The Shakespeare Society of New York,

INCORPORATED APRIL 20, 1885.



To promote the knowledge and study of the Works  
of Wm. Shakespeare, and the Shakespearian  
and Elizabethan Drama.

## IN EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE,

JUNE 15, 1885.

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*Resolved*, That in order that the papers printed under authority of this Society may be of the highest character, and of value from all standpoints, the Society does not stand pledged as responsible for the opinions expressed or conclusions arrived at in the said papers, but considers itself only responsible in so far as it certifies by its Imprimatur that it considers them as original contributions to Shakespearean study, and as showing upon their face care, labor and research.

1  
Anal. - p. 25.

Papers of D. P. Shakespeare Society, No. 5.

Time in the Play of Hamlet,

BY

EDWARD P. VINING.

Read before the Society December 3d, 1885.

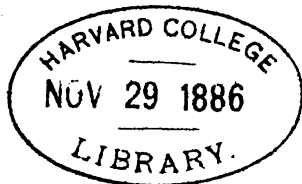
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Press of the New York Shakespeare Society.

1886.



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Lowell Fund.

## Time in the Play of Hamlet.

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If it were not for the fact that we find conflicting opinions as to the force and meaning of some one or more words or phrases in almost every scene of Shakespeare's dramas, and that—as to "Hamlet" in particular—nearly every critic differs in many vital points from all others of his army of co-laborers, it might be a matter of some surprise to see the great divergence of opinion as to the length of time covered by the action of this tragedy.

On the one side it has been seriously contended that its entire action transpired within a period of not more than ten days ; while on the other it has been thought to extend over at least ten years. Nay, more, there have been those who, in eloquent phrase, have urged the view that Shakespeare's method of dealing with the dramatic element of time is to artfully convey two opposite ideas of its flight—swiftness and slowness—so that by one

series of allusions we receive the impression that the action of the drama is driving on in hot haste, and that all the events are compressed within a period of but a few days; while by another series we are insensibly beguiled into the belief that they extend over months or years. "So," say they, "whenever time comes in as an element, we are subject to Shakespeare's glamour and gramarye—to his legerdemain. We are held in a confusion and delusion about the time."

This theory is so pretty and striking—it harmonizes so nicely with our natural love of mysticism and transcendental lore, and with the vague views of those who fancy that they are diving into the depths of Shakespeare when they do but skim the surface—that it is a pity that the facts are all against it.

Now, the truth is that our immortal poet has laid out the action of the different scenes with minute consideration both of the time occupied by each and of the interval elapsing between them, when any occurs, and he has so carefully indicated the lapse of time that he

who runs may read, if he will but look as he runs. There is no conflict, no glamour; neither confusion nor delusion.

Henry A. Clapp has recently shown this so clearly that it may seem a work of supererogation to again discuss the matter. He, however, considered the general subject of the passage of time in all of Shakespeare's plays, and, therefore, could devote but little space to the one drama of "Hamlet"; hence, it seems possible that to his masterly presentation of the subject something may be added which will be of interest to Shakespearean students.

ACT I., Scene i., of the tragedy of "Hamlet" opens at midnight and continues until dawn, and at its close, Marcellus, speaking of Hamlet, says :

*I this morning know  
Where we shall find him most conveniently.*

In Scene ii. Horatio says of the ghost :

*My lord, I think I saw him yesternight,*

and Hamlet declares :

*I'll watch to-night.  
Upon the platform, 'twixt eleven and twelve  
I'll visit you.*

This watch and its events are given in Scenes iv. and v., while the third scene fills out the day, before the night comes on.

Between the first and second acts, one—and the principal one—of the two intervals in the play occurs; a lapse of time, as will hereafter be shown, of a little more than two months.

In ACT II., Scene i., Polonius says :

*I will go seek the king.*

and in Scene ii. he enters the Audience Chamber and announces that he has found

*The very cause of Hamlet's lunacy.*

In the same scene the players arrive, and Hamlet says of the play of "The Murder of Gonzago :"

*We'll ha't to-morrow night.*

This act, therefore, covers but one day, while the first scene of the next act occurs on the following day, as is proven by the words of Rosencranz in reference to the actors :

*They have already order  
This night to play before him.*

In Scene ii. this mimic drama is given, and Scenes iii. and iv. occur the same night, Hamlet's interview with his mother taking place, in accordance with the message brought to him, immediately after the breaking up of the play :

*She desires to speak with you in her closet ere you  
go to bed.*

Act iv. commences with a continuation of the events of the same night, as is shown by Gertrude's words :

*Ah, my good lord, what have I seen to-night !*

while the king declares :

*The sun no sooner shall the mountains touch,  
But we will ship him hence.*

Morning has not dawned at the close of Scene iii., for among the last words of the king is the declaration :

*I'll have him hence to-night.*

Between Scenes iii. and v. the second interval of the play occurs ; a period, probably,

of not less than two weeks, nor more than about a month.

In the last words of Scene v. the king says to Laertes :

*I pray you go with me,*

and the conversation between them is concluded in Scene vii. In the same scene the letter from Hamlet is read, in which he writes :

*To-morrow shall I beg leave to see your kingly eyes.*

Ophelia's burial, in Act v., Scene i., takes place on the following day, for the king says to Laertes :

*Strengthen your patience in our last night's speech:*

and there is no reason for thinking the action of the final scene to be delayed beyond the close of the same day, for in it Hamlet concludes his explanations to Horatio, and is welcomed "back to Denmark" by Osric, who must, therefore, then meet him for the first time since his return. Moreover, the

words of the king in his last speech, in Scene i.,

*We'll put the matter to the present push,*

indicate clearly that it was not his intention to allow any delay to occur.

It, therefore, appears that ACT I. represents the events of two nights and the intervening day, and that some interval of time then elapses. ACT II., Scene i, to ACT IV., Scene iii., inclusive, covers two days and the night following the second day; and, after a second interval, the events of two days are given in ACT IV., Scene v., and the remaining scenes of the play.

It now remains to determine the length of the two intervals.

ACT I. opens when the late king was

*But two months dead; nay, not so much, not two;*

while in the third act the time since his death is stated to be "twice two months." The interval is, therefore, two months, or a little more. During this time Hamlet, in pursuance of his studied plan,



*Fell into a sadness, then into a fast,  
Thence to a watch, thence into a weakness,  
Thence to a lightness, and by this declension*

into his feigned madness. During this time Ophelia, in accordance with her father's commands,

*Did repel his letters, and denied  
His access to her.*

That she had not spoken with him for some length of time is shown by her statement that the presents given her by him she had

*Longed long to re-deliver,*

and it was only on the day preceding the opening of ACT II. that Hamlet had carried his feigned insanity so far as to force his way into her closet and frighten her with his antics. It was at about this time also that the king decided upon his "hasty sending" for Rosencranz and Guildenstern, that they, by associating with him, might learn the cause of his affliction. The ambassadors, whose departure for Norway is mentioned in the first act, are welcomed home again in the second,

thus giving us another evidence of the lapse of time. Still another indication of the length of the interval is contained in the fact that Lamond, a gentleman of Normandy, reached the Danish court after Laertes' departure and "two months" before his return.

In the second interval there has been time enough for the news of the death of Polonius to reach Laertes in Paris, and for him, "in secret," to return and spend some time in hiding, while he

*Feeds on his wonder, keeps himself in clouds,  
And wants not buzzers to infect his ear  
With pestilent speeches of his father's death :*

until at last he raises the body of men by whose aid he breaks through the defences of the king and demands vengeance for the death of his father. The interval had also been sufficient for Fortinbras to march from Denmark to Poland, win a victory there, and then return as far as the Danish court on his way home. It was not sufficient, however, for Rosencranz and Guildenstern to reach England, there to meet their deaths, and for

the news to be brought back from England to Denmark. Although Hamlet leaped upon the "pirate" ship when only two days out at sea, it is likely that a much greater time would elapse before his return. If it were only for appearances' sake, it would be necessary that he should remain on the ship for some little length of time to keep up the pretence that it was a "pirate" that had attacked him, and in order that the fact might not become known that it was in reality one of the vessels of Fortinbras that had rescued him in accordance with a plot agreed upon between the two princes. On his return he recognized the fact that the interim before the arrival of the news from England would be but short, and that in this time, if ever, he must act. In truth he had not an hour to spare, for the English ambassadors reached the Danish court only a few minutes after the death of the king.

The best clue to the length of the interval between Scenes iii. and iv. of the fourth act is, however, given by the flowers that were in bloom at each of the two periods.

In the last scene there are named pansies, columbines, daisies, crowflowers, nettles and long-purples ; flowers which in England (and it is the English rather than the Danish flora that is referred to by Shakespeare) are all in bloom during the month of April. The time of Polonius's death is fixed with beautiful precision by the words of Ophelia :

*I would give you some violets, but they withered  
all when my father died.*

It is in March that the English violets bloom and pass away.

The early violets of the United States, the "Johnny Jump-ups" of the children, have a curious synchronism in their flowering, which distinguishes them from other plants, and which seems to have passed unnoticed. Go at the right time, and you may find the grass beneath the trees and in moist or shady spots fairly blue with unnumbered myriads of these blossoms. Go two days later, and you may look in vain for a single specimen. They wither, literally, in a day. This little phrase of Shakespeare's shows the same peculiarity

to be true of the English violets; and yet Shakespeare is the only writer who has observed it. Many another poet would have made it the basis of a dozen similes, and would have spun out verse after verse with varying references to it, yet Shakespeare in his wealth makes but this unnoticed and incidental allusion to the fact, and refers to it no more forever.

The flowers that are mentioned, therefore, show that the tragedy ends in April, and that it was some time during the month of March that Polonius was slain. The action commenced some two months, or a little more, before that time, or during the first half of the month of January, a time when

*The air bites shrewdly ; it is very cold.*

About two months before this, or early in November, the treacherous Claudius stole upon his sleeping brother,

*With juice of cursed hebenon in a vial,  
And in the porches of his ear did pour  
The leperous distilment.*

And it was in December, or

*Within a month—*

*A little month !*

after her first husband's death that Gertrude married his murderer.

Why was it that for thirty days the perturbed spirit of the former king allowed

*The royal bed of Denmark (to) be  
A couch for luxury and damned incest,*

and made no sign ?

The answer is given by Marcellus :

*Ever 'gainst that season comes  
Wherein our Saviour's birth is celebrated  
The bird of dawning singeth all night long ;  
And then, they say no spirit dare stir abroad.*

It was, therefore, not until after the Christmas holidays were passed, that the ghost of Hamlet's father could bring his message from the grave.

Here it may be well to notice a variation between the first quarto and the following editions of Hamlet, the only one in which the time is changed. In the first form of the play that has come down to us, Gertrude's

marriage did not occur until about two months after her first husband's death, and the drama opens immediately after her wedding. The winter's cold is but slightly referred to, and the season of the year seems not to have been as firmly fixed in Shakespeare's mind as it was by further thought and study.

There are two passages which seem to indicate warmer weather than is consistent either with the "bitter cold," which is twice referred to, or with a January night. These are :

*The morn, in russet mantle clad,  
Walks o'er the dew of yon high eastern hill*

and

*The glow-worm shows the matin to be near,  
And 'gins to pale his uneffectual fire.*

These I can only account for by the theory that they formed part of the drama in an earlier state, before the time of the play had been fully developed, and that their beauty saved them in the later forms that we now have, notwithstanding their inconsistency with the "bitter cold" of a winter's night.

It cannot escape attention that the first days of November would be very late for the elder Hamlet to be able to continue his afternoon custom of sleeping within his orchard. Still, it is not impossible that pleasant autumn weather might continue until that season of the year.

It may be worthy of notice that the action in the original "Hystorie of Hamblet," on which the drama is founded, covers a period of "many years," and that in the German play, "Fratricide Punished," which by some is thought to be an adaptation of an early form of the drama which has not otherwise reached us, there is not a single indication of any definite lapse of time or of the season of the year.

In the tragedy, as we now possess it, there are, as shown above, two or three passages in which there is some apparent conflict with the remainder of the play, as to the season of the year in which the action took place; but for any evidence of uncertainty as to the lapse of time; for any legerdemain or glamour, the



student will look in vain. On the contrary, there are but few creations of the intellect in which the passage of time is as clearly and unmistakably indicated.

As for the various points that have been thought to show some confusion in the mind of our poet, there are none which upon careful examination will not be found to have melted into air—thin air—leaving not a rack behind.

When Hamlet learned the truth of his suspicions, and resolved to obey his father's entreaties for revenge, he needed the aid of a stronger mind, and felt the want of sympathy and counsel; but it is not remarkable that Horatio should have remained unnoticed about the court for some two months after his arrival, during the time that Hamlet was first occupied in brooding over his father's death and his mother's shame; for then his melancholy filled his mind to the exclusion of all other thoughts, and he had not felt it necessary to take any immediate action. Polonius was surprised at Ophelia's account

of the outbreak of Hamlet, for it had but just occurred, and no such indication of violent madness had preceded it; Hamlet's former state having been that of a gradual passage from sadness to fasting, sleeplessness, weakness and lightness, and his feigned insanity had but just reached a state which frightened the king into sending for the former companions of the prince to keep him company.

Ophelia had longed for a considerable period to re-deliver Hamlet's remembrances, for, in accordance with her father's instructions, she had denied him all access to her for some two months, and on the occasion (the day before she returned his gifts) when Hamlet, in fantastic attire, came suddenly before her, no word was spoken, and her surprise and agitation would naturally have prevented all thought of his remembrances.

When Hamlet tells Rosencrantz and Guildenstern that he has "of late foregone all custom of exercises," it is merely as an excuse for his loss of mirth, in order that they may

not learn its true cause; but the fact was, as Hamlet confessed to Horatio, that since the time when Laertes went into France (that is to say, since the time when the ghost first appeared to him) he had been in continual practice with the foils.

Laertes had been at home, "in secret," for some little time before he forced his way into the presence of the king, gathering the populace to his side and maturing his plans for rebellion. There is no reason to believe that he had failed to take time to go to his own home after returning from France. On the contrary, Ophelia's words,

*My brother shall know of it,*

indicate that even in her madness there remained in her mind a knowledge of her brother's presence near her. Laertes was surprised at her insanity, for her mind had but just given way, and he, with the king and queen, saw her first violent outbreak.

It seems strange that the King should propose a fencing match but a few hours after

the burial of Ophelia, and that her brother should be willing to engage in it ; but the King's fear of Hamlet, and Laertes' desire for revenge, were so great as to override all other considerations.

The discrepancy between Hamlet's apparent "youth" and the thirty years which are fixed as his age by the words of the grave-digger and of the player King, is the last point to which reference need be made ; and, without stopping to discuss the subject here, it may be briefly said that much of the apparent discrepancy disappears upon careful examination, and that sufficient explanation may be found for the little that may appear to remain.

In this, as in other cases, the truth is, that Shakespeare wrote with all care, and indulged in neither legerdemain nor clap-trap. We may safely conclude that whenever faults appear to us to exist in his work, they are much more likely to lie in our own carelessness and ignorance than in any imperfection in the poet.



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## COMMUNICATION

FROM

*James Orchard*

J. O. HALLIWELL-PHILLIPPS, Esq.



## COMMUNICATION .

From J. O. HALLIWELL-PHILLIPPS, F. R. S.,  
F. S. A., Hon. M. R. S. L., Hon. M. R.  
I. A. : First Honorary Member of the Shakespeare Society of New York.

(Read in Society December 3rd, 1885, and ordered incorporated in the Minutes.)

HOLLINBURY COPSE, BRIGHTON, ENGLAND, {  
14th November, 1885. }

*Dear Mr. Appleton Morgan,*

It will, I fear, be too difficult for me to express, in adequate terms, my appreciation of the compliment that the Shakespeare Society of New York propose to bestow upon me. I take it as exceedingly kind of them so to notice an old bookworm, and let me hope that you will offer my responsive acknowledgements.

But it occurs to me to submit to their notice a few memoranda on the history of the first Shakespeare Society that was ever formed, in the hope that they may prove of some little interest, especially as evidences that it is possible for Shakespearean research and criticism to be amicably and temperately conducted for a lengthened period, and thence presumably forever.

The Shakespeare Society of London was instituted in the year 1840, the then leading members of the council being the director, Mr. Payne Collier; the secretary, Mr. F. G. Tomlins; the treasurer, Mr. Dilke, grandfather of the present Sir Charles Dilke; Rev. William Harness; Charles Knight; Campbell, the poet; Macready, Alexander Dyce, Douglas Jerrold, Sergeant Talfourd, Thomas Wright, and Young, the tragedian. To these were added shortly afterward Bolton Corney, Charles Dickens, Henry Hallam, J. R. Planché and Peter Cunningham, the last named taking the place of Mr. Dilke as treasurer. Later acquisitions included Boyle Bernard, Knight Bruce, John Forster, Rev. H. H. Milman and Sir George Rose.

The society was especially fortunate in the selection of its director. A fluent speaker, courteous to all, ever



in a good humor, always ready to encourage younger men in his favourite pursuits, and, withal, a good financier, Payne Collier was the beau idea of the chairman of a literary society.

Mr. Tomlins, a journalist and dramatic critic, made in every respect an excellent secretary. Replete with good humor and fun, he frequently enlivened what might otherwise have been a somewhat too dull and technical meeting of the council ; without allowing all this, I need scarcely add, to interfere with the legitimate duties of his office.

Mr. Cunningham—kind-hearted, genial Peter—was our excellent treasurer from nearly the commencement to the termination of our society. In common with most literary and scientific bodies, the power of government rested in an oligarchy, and I have specially mentioned these three names, being those in whom the real control of the society was vested, however wisely they accepted the services or adopted the advices of others. But there was, indeed, no one who desired to share in the absolute responsibility of the management ; least of all, no one who was foolish enough to aim at the position of a supreme dictator. A few observations from recollection of two or three of the other members of the council may, perhaps, be admissible.

Macready only attended occasionally, but one of his first steps (he being then the lessee of the Drury Lane Theater) was an announcement that he had placed the names of every member of the council on the free list of that establishment, made an indelible impression on my memory. It was a delightful communication, money then being an exceedingly scarce commodity with me ; and thus I was enabled to witness and study nearly every evening the best acting of the day, including the unrivaled personification of *Imogen* by Helen Faucit.

Alexander Dyce was a frequent attendant. Although sometimes caustic in his writings, he was the reverse at the council and in conversation, and that he was personally one of the kindest and best hearted of men few

can vouch with more accuracy than myself, having enjoyed the advantage of his friendship from the days of my boyhood until his death in the year 1869.

Planche, the most prolific English dramatist England has seen since the days of Heywood, was also a frequent attendant. He was one of the most amiable and genial of men, one whose genius and graceful humor have not as yet been adequately recognized.

There was not, in fact, a single member of the council in whom was embedded an element of discord in respect to the objects or management of the society, and having belonged to the council from the time of its institution in 1840, until its dissolution in 1853, I can bear sufficient testimony to the enduring harmony that prevailed.

The same kind feelings and good humor characterized the annual general meetings, where, I verily believe, if an egotistical literary firebrand had ventured to disturb the general concord—and no one else could have managed such an achievement—he would have been gently and courteously lynched. It is true that I am speaking of a primitive and unenlightened period, before it had been suggested that Shakespeare was somebody else: but even the enunciation of so startling a theory as that would not, I am persuaded, have disturbed the serenity of a body who had perfect reliance on freedom of criticism, leading eventually to the victory of truth.

A similar catholicity of spirit—the absence of a specific platform—the trenchant and spontaneous rejection, if I understand your scheme rightly, of nothing but offensive dogmatism and insolent criticism—these are the elements that will commend the Shakespeare Society of New York to every temperate student, and demand his earnest wishes for its influence and permanency.

With a reiteration of my grateful acknowledgments to your society for their kindness, and apologies for intruding upon them this little specimen of an old man's garrulity, believe me, yours faithfully.

[Signed] J. O. HALLIWELL-PHILLIPS.  
To Appleton Morgan, Esq., President of the Shakespeare Society of New York.



2  
Papers of N. Y. Shakespeare Society, No. 6.

0  
The Once Used Words in Shakespeare,

BY

JAMES DAVIE BUTLER.

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Read before the Society April 22, 1886.

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Press of the New York Shakespeare Society.

1886.



## THE "Ἀπαξ λεγόμενα IN SHAKESPEARE.

*Omnia rara præclara; ipsa raritate rariora.*

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When we examine the vocabulary of Shakespeare what first strikes us is its copiousness. His characters are countless, and each one speaks his own dialect. His little fishes never talk like whales, nor do his whales talk like little fishes. The language assigned to each character is made suitable to it, and to no other, and this with a truth and naturalness which the readers and spectators of every following age have recognized. Those curious in such matters have espied in his works quotations from seven foreign tongues, and those from Latin alone amount to one hundred and thirty-two.

Our first impression that the Shakespearian variety of words is multitudinous is confirmed by statistics. The titles in Mrs. Cowden Clarke's Shakespearian Concordance, counted

one by one, have been ascertained to be more than twenty-four thousand. The total vocabulary of Milton's poetical remains is more nearly seventeen than eighteen thousand (17,377); and that of Homer, including the hymns as well as both *Iliad* and *Odyssey*, is scarcely nine thousand. Five thousand eight hundred and sixty words exhaust the vocabulary of Dante's *Divina Comedia*. In the English Bible the different words are reckoned by Mr. G. P. Marsh, in his lectures on the English language, at rather fewer than six thousand. Renan's estimate is 5,642. The number of titles, however, in Cruden's Concordance has been found to be greater by more than a thousand, namely, 7,209. Those in Robinson's *Lexicon of the Greek Testament* I have learned by actual count to be about five thousand five hundred.

Some German writers on Greek grammar believe they could have taught Plato and Demosthenes useful lessons concerning Greek moods and tenses, even as the ancient Athenians, according to the fable of Phaedrus,

undertook to prove that a pig did not know how to squeal so well as they did. However this may be, any one of us to-day, thanks to the Concordance of Mrs. Clarke and the lexicon of Alexander Schmidt, may know much concerning Shakespeare's use of language which Shakespeare himself could not have known. One particular as to which he must have been instinctively ignorant, while we may have knowledge, is regarding his employment of once used words.

The phrase "*Απαξ λεγόμενα*, literally "once spoken," may be traced back to the Alexandrine glossographers, centuries before our era, who invented it to describe those words which they observed to occur once, and only once, in any author of literature. It is so convenient an expression for statistical commentators on the Bible, and on the classics as well, that they will not willingly let it die. The synonymous phrase "*Απαξ ειρημμένα* is also a favorite with some Germans, but if we accent it according to its Greek accents, it is hard to pronounce, and I accordingly eschew it.



The list of words used once, and only once, in Shakespeare, is surprisingly large. Those words are more than any man can easily number. Nevertheless I have counted those beginning with two letters. The result is that the once used words with initial A are 364, and those with initial M are 310.

I have no reason to suppose the census with these initials to be proportionally greater than that with other letters. If it is not, then the Shakespearian words occurring only once cannot be fewer than 5,000, and they are probably a still greater legion.

The number I have culled from 146 pages of Schmidt is 674. At this rate the total on the 1,409 pages of the entire lexicon would foot up 6,504. It is possible then that Shakespeare discarded, after once trying them, more different words than fill and enrich the whole English Bible. The old grammarians said their term *supine* was so named because it was very seldom employed, and therefore was almost always *lying on its back*. The

supines of Shakespeare outnumbered the employees of most authors.

No notices of Shakespearian *Ἀπαξ λεγόμενα* had come to my knowledge when my attention was first called to that theme. In the midst of my investigation, however, I observed a statement in the London *Academy* (No. 402, p. 48) that some English scholar had counted no less than 549 words in the single play of *Henry V.* that are nowhere else discoverable in the Shakespearian dramas. It may also be worth noting that the first line which Shakespeare ever wrote, or at least published, namely :

“ Even as the sun with *purple-colored* face.”

contains a compound which he thenceforth and forever refrained from repeating.

The multitude of Shakespearian once used words appears still more surprising if we compare it with expressions of the same class in the Scriptures and in Homer.

In the English Bible the once used words with the initial A 69 and M 63 are in all one

hundred and thirty-two, to 674 under the same initials in Shakespeare. These Biblical terms would be more than twice as many as we find them if as numerous in proportion to their total vocabulary as his are.

The Homeric once used words with initial M are 78. But if as numerous in proportion to Homer's whole world of words as Shakespeare's are, they would run up to 186 ; that is, to more than twice as many as their actual number.

In the *Greek* New Testament I have counted sixty-three once used words commencing with the letter M, a number as large as that in the whole English Bible commencing with the same letter, which is also exactly sixty-three. The fact indicates in St. Paul, and others who wrote the Greek Testament, a wider range of expression than their English translators could boast.

The Shakespearian once used words with initial M.—which amount to over three hundred (310), I have also compared with the whole verbal inventory of the English language so

far as it begins with that letter. To my surprise they make up almost one-fifth of that stock, which, on the authority of the *Nation* (vol. XX, p. 345.) can muster only 1,641 words, with initial M.

You will at once inquire: What is the *nature* of these rejected Shakesperian vocables, which he seems to have viewed either as milk that would bear no more than one skimming, or rather as "beauty too rich for use, for earth too dear?" The percentage of *classical* words among them is great—greater indeed than in the body of Shakespeare's writings. According to the analysis of Weisse, in an average hundred of Shakespearian words one-third are classical and two-thirds Saxon. But then, he adds, all the classical elements have inherent meaning, while half of the Saxon have none. The result is that of the significant words in Shakespeare one-half are of classical derivation.

Now of the once used words with initial A, I call 262 words out of 364 classical, and 152 out of the 310 with the initial M. That is: 414 out

of 674, or about four-sevenths of the whole host commencing with those two letters.

In doubtful cases I have classed those words only as classical, the first etymology of which in Webster is from a classical or Romance root. In the Biblical once used words the classical factor is enormous, namely not less than 69 per cent., while even in Shakespearian words of the same class it is no more than sixty-one.

Again, among the 674 A. and M. once used words, the proportion of words now obsolete is unexpectedly *small*. Of 310 with initial M, only one-sixth, or fifty-one at the utmost are now disused either in sense, or even in form. Of this half-hundred a few were used in Shakespeare, but are not at present, as verbs: as to maculate, to miracle, to mud, to mist, to mischief, to moral. Also, merchandized and musicked.

Another class, now rarely written, are misproud, misdread, mappery, mansionary, marybuds, masterdom, mistership, mistressship.

Then there are slight variants from our or-

thography or meanings, as mained for maimed, markman for marksman, make for mate, makeless for mateless: mirable, mervailous, mess for mass,—manakin, minikin, meyny for many, momentany for momentary: misgraffing, mountainer, moraler, misanthropos: mott for motto; to mutine: minutely, every minute.

None seem wholly dead words except the following eighteen. To *mammock* tear, *mell* meddle, *mose* mourn, *micher* truant, *mome* fool, *mallecho* mischief, *maund* basket, *marcantant* merchant, *mun* sound of the wind, *mnre* wall, *meacock* henpecked, *mop* grin, *militarist* soldier, *murrian* affected with murrain, *hammering* hesitating,—*mered* only—*mountant* raised up.

The once used words in Shakespeare are often so beautiful and poetical that we wonder how they could fail to be his favorites again and again, for they are jewels that might hang twenty years before our eyes yet never lose their lustre. Why were they never shown but once?

They remind me of the exquisite crystal

bowl from which I saw a Jewess and her bridegroom drink in Prague, and which was then dashed in pieces on the floor of the synagogue, or of the Chigi porcelain painted by Raphael, which, as soon as it had been once removed from the table, was thrown into the Tiber. To what purpose was this waste? Why should they be used up with once using? Even the Greek drama that would never presume to let a god appear but for an action worthy of a god, was not so pervaded with horror of too much.

Some specimens of this class which all writers but Shakespeare would have often paraded as pets, are such words as magical, mirthful, mightful, merriness, majestically, marbled, martyred, mountainous, magnanimity, magnificence, marrowless, matin, masterpiece, masterdom, meander, mellifluous, menaces, mockable, monarchize, moon-beams, motto, mundane, mural, multipotent, mourningly, etc.

About one-tenth of the remaining once used words with initial M, are descriptive com-

pounds. Nearly all of them are among the following twenty-six adjectives: maiden-tongued, maiden-widowed, man-entered, many-headed, marble-breasted, marble-constant, marble-hearted, marrow-eating, mean-appareled, merchant-marring, mercy-lacking, mirth-moving, moving-delicate, mock-water, more-having, mortal-breathing, mortal-living, mortal-staring, motley-minded, mouse-eaten, moss-grown, mouth-filling, mouth-made, muddy-mettled, maid-pale, momentary-swift.

From this list, which is nearly complete, it is evident that such compounds as may be multiplied at will by a word coiner, form but a small proportion of the words that are used once only by Shakespeare.

Again, a majority of Shakespearian once used words being familiar to us as household words, and needful to us as daily food, it seems impossible that he who had cared to use them once should have need of them no more.

Some specimens, all with initial M, are the words, mechanics, machine, maxim, mission, monastic, mode, marsh, magnify, majority,



malcontent, malignancy, manly (as an adverb), malleable, manna, maratime, manslaughter, market-day, masterly, mealy, meekly, miserably, mercifully, mindful, memorial, mention, merchantlike, mercenary, memorandums, mercurial, meridian, medal, metropolis, mimic, metaphysics, ministration, to moderate, misapply, misconstruction, misgovernment, misquote, monster-like, monstrosity, moneyed, monopoly, mutable, mortised, mortise, muniments, mother-wit.

The letter M, which has been the staple of the present paper, is probably a fair representative of Shakespeare's diction in regard to words which he would term "seld-shown." The subject, however, deserves to be treated more exhaustively. Every letter ought to be investigated as a single one has now been, and more abundantly. Nor would the labor be arduous, if the task were assumed by any Shakespearian club and divided among a score of its fellows, as the work of lexicography was among the forty members of the French Aca-

demy. Such an examination would conclusively confirm, or confute, the conclusions to which the facts now set forth have led. It would also suggest others, and those of still greater interest.

In drawing up catalogues of once-used words, if such a set of co-laborers would append to each word the name of the play in which it occurs, the Shakesperian dramas could be easily compared in a manner which has never hitherto been possible. The once used words in each particular play would be readily drawn out in a table. Then it would at once become manifest how far the number of such words varied in different works, and whether it was greatest in the early, or middle, or latest period of Shakespearian productivity.

In a casual reading of *Cymbeline* and *Henry VIII.*, more than three score words in each that are elsewhere unfound have struck my eye; but more hundreds must have been passed unnoticed. Aside from the 549 once-used words in *Henry V.*, already mentioned, I know not that such verbal statistics have

been gathered. But they would not be without manifold utilities. They would aid in judging by style concerning the genuineness of doubtful passages. They would show how far Shakespeare's alms basket of such words, which he calls "fire-new," continued to the last, like charity, which never faileth.

The array of once-used words which has been drawn up in the present writing, must—as I think—surprise any one who passes them in review. The further one pushes research in the same line, the more his wonder will grow. Of compounds with the pre-fix *re*—like reiterate and resignation—he will discover one hundred and fifty lacking two, no one of which he will meet with again. To the same class of vocables undiscoverable a second time belongs every word in the line, "Un-houseled, disappointed, unaneled," as I have already stated, and the italicized words in the following phrases :

"Horns *whelked* and *waved* like the *enridged* sea"

"Massy *staples*

And *correspensive* and fulfilling bolts *sperr* up,"

In the following nine lines, which are almost consecutive, the words in italics, numbering nine (or ten, if we count *lash*, which is nowhere else employed in the sense of the thong or cord of a whip), make their entrances and exits once for all.

“ In shape no bigger than an *agate-stone*  
Her *wagon-spokes* made of long spinner's legs,  
The cover of the wings of *grasshoppers*,  
The *traces* of the smallest spider's web.  
Her wagoner a small *gray-coated* gnat  
Her whip of cricket's bone, the lash a *film*.  
Time out of mind the fairies' *coachmakers*,  
And sometimes comes she with a *tithe-pig's* tail,  
Then dreams he of another *benefice*.”

And yet *Romeo and Juliet*, the play from which this passage is extracted, was among Shakespeare's earliest efforts. Though a prolific writer for twenty years afterward, he had no occasion for any one of these words even once again,—and repeated the phrase “time out of mind” only on one occasion.

Nowhere perhaps will the student of Shakespearean diction be more astonished than in observing how uncommon is the repetition of

the commonest words. Who would anticipate that such vocables as the following would never do duty but once? Fuller, shoemaker, straggler, praying, crazy, sisterly, scholarly, profoundly, prodigiously, wordless, comeliness, restful, fitful, forefoot, forecast, springhalt, rinsing, flannel, frock, sprout, leech, salamander, flail, flake, cater, corpulent, beverage, navigation, salary, omen, obscurity, cataract, cathedral, symbol, gospel, inwardness, Jesus, disciple, apostle, exhortation, homily, dirge, papist, institution, fragile,—or such word-clusters as, definite, definitive, definitively; or these five sprouts from one root, to elf, elvish, elvish-marked, elf-lock, elf-skin.

No one class of once-used words is more conspicuous in Shakespeare than *alliterative compounds*. This fact will be clear from the following very partial register of such formations: all-abhorred, all-admiring, bow-back, burly-boned, bugbear, bull-bearing, bull-beeves, blood-bespotted, brow-bound, bate-breeding, blood-boltered, bow-boy, baby-

brow, care-crazed, cloud-capped, counter-caster, cain-colored, canvas-climber, child-changed, custard-coffin, chamber-council, death-darting, dew-dropping, death-divining, deep-drawing, drug-dammed, dove-drawn, dismal-dreaming, double-dealing, double-damned, deep-drenched, dumb-discursive, ever-esteemed, fast-falling, folly-fallen, foot-fall, faultful, fitful, fiery-footed, fleet-footed, fleet-foot, full-flowing, forceful, fraudulent feast-finding, false-faced, foul-faced, free-footed, filly-foal, full-fed, find-fault, full-fraught, glass-gazing, gain-giving, grim-grinning, guts-gripping, great-grown, hard-hearted, hard-handed, heaven-hued, heavenly-harnessed, heavy-hanging, heart-hardening, hell-hated, highly-heaped, hoary-headed, hollow-hearted, hydra-headed, honey-heavy, honest-hearted, harvest-home, king-killer, love-lacking, low-laid, lack-luster, love-letter, lack-linen, lack-love, lank-lean, lass-lorn, long-legged, lily-livered, lazar-like, long-lived, lean-looking, light o' love, peace-parted, periwig-pated, proud-pied, pity-pleading, plume-

plucked, pistol-proof, plot-proof, ripe-red, riding-robe, riding-rod, surfeit-swelled, cinque-spotted, sweet-suggesting, saint-seducing, sober-sad, sad-set, sea-salt, sea-sorrow, sea-swallowed, silver-sweet, sober-suited, still-stand, ship-side, spirit-stirring, super-subtle, super-serviceable, sweet-seasoned, summer-swelling, summer-steaming, sick-service, sly-slow, snail-slow, softly-sprighted, soft-slow, trumpet-tongued, tempest-tossed, tongue-tied, true-telling, travel-tainted, virgin-violator, want-wit, water-walled, wave-worn, war-worn, woolward, well-willer, well-won, water-work, wonder-wounded.

These words, and four or five thousand more equally excellent, which have been the golden language of the English-speaking world for three centuries since Shakespeare's time—and which, belonging to the immortal part of its vernacular, will be so forever—we are apt to think he should have worn in their newest gloss, not cast aside so soon. Why was he as shy of repeating them as Hudibras was of showing his wit,

“ Who bore it not about  
As if afraid to wear it out,  
Except on holidays or so,  
As men their best apparel do?

This question, why a full fourth of Shakespeare's verbal riches was never brought to light more than once, is probably one which nobody can at present answer, even to his own satisfaction. Yet the phenomenon is so remarkable that every one will try after his own fashion to account for it. My own attempt at a provisional explanation I will present in the latter part of this paper.

Meantime, we are left to conjectures. As of his own coinage I should set down such words as mirth-moving, merriness, motley-minded, masterdom, mockable, marbled-martyred, marrowless, mightful, multipotent, monarchize, etc., etc.

Let us first notice another question concerning the once used words, namely that which respects their *origin*. Where did they come from? How far did Shakespeare make them, and how far were they ready to his hand?



No approach to answering this inquiry can be made for some years. Yet as to this matter let us rejoice that the dictionary of the British Philological Society is now near publication. This work, slowly elaborated by thousands of co-workers in many devious walks of study on both sides of the Atlantic, aims to exhibit the first appearance, in a book, of every English word. In regard to the great bulk of Shakespeare's diction, it will enable us ten years hence to see how much of it was known to literature before him, and how much of it he himself, a snapper up of unconsidered trifles, gathered or gleaned in highways and byways, or caused to ramify and effloresce from Saxon or classical roots and trunks, thus endowing his purposes with words to make them known. Professor Skeat, the most painstaking investigator known to me of early English, has discovered the word "disappointed" in no author earlier than Shakespeare. Nor has Shakespeare made use of that word more than once, namely in the line :

"Unhouselled, disappointed, unaneled."

In that line all the words without exception are once used words.

The word "disappointed" is not employed by Shakespeare in its modern meaning, but as signifying *unprepared*; or better, perhaps, *unshriven*.

But however much of his linguistic treasury Shakespeare shall be proved to have inherited ready-made: whatever scraps he may have stolen at the feast of languages, it is clear that he was an imperial creator of language. Having a mint of phrases in his own brain, well might he speak with the contempt he does of those "fools who for a tricky word defy the matter,"—that is, slight or disregard it. He never needed to do that. Words were "correspondent to his command" and, "Ariel-like, did his sprighting gently." When has any verbal necessity compelled him to give his sense a turn that does not naturally belong to it?

It is very possible that Shakespeare frequently shunned expressions he had once pre-

ferred, because otherwise his style would become monotonous, and so cloy the hungry edge of appetite. According to his own authority, "when they seldom come they wished to come." And again :

" Therefore are feasts so solemn and so rare,  
Since seldom coming in the long years set,  
Like stones of worth they thinly placed are,  
Or captain jewels in the carcanet."

In thousands of cases, however, Shakespeare cannot have rejected words through fear lest he should repeat them. It has taken three centuries for the world to ferret out these once used words. Can we believe that he himself knew them all? Unless he were the Providence which numbers all hairs of the head, he had not got the start of the majestic world so far as that, however myriad-minded we may consider him.

An instinct which would have rendered him aware of each and every individual of five thousand words that he had employed once only would be as inconceivable as that of Falstaff which made him discern at mid-

night the heir apparent in Prince Hal, when disguised as a highwayman.

In the absence of other theories concerning the reasons for the Shakesperian once used words being so abundant, I throw out a suggestion of my own, which may stand till a better one shall supplant it. Shakespeare's forte lay in diversified characterization, and, in my judgment, when he had sketched each several character, he was never content till he had either found or fabricated the aptest words possible for painting its form and pressure even in all *nuances* most true to life. No two characters being—more than any two faces—*identical in any particular*; hence no two descriptions as drawn by his genius could repeat many of the self-same words. Each of his vocables thus became, like each one of the seven thousand pieces in a locomotive, a detail fitting precisely the one niche it was ordained to fill, but out of place, dislocated, everywhere else.

The more his ethical differentiations, the more his language was differentiated. His

personages were as diversified as those portrayed by the whole band of Italian painters. But, being a wizard in words, he resembled the magician in mosaic who can delineate in stone every feature of those portraits, thanks to his discriminating and imitating shades of color, as numberless as are even Shakespeare's words.

It is hard to believe that Shakespeare's characters were born, like Athene from the brain of Jove, in panoplied perfection. They grew. The play of *Troilus* was a dozen years in growth. Internal evidence favors the opinion that *Romeo and Juliet* was an early work, and that it was subsequently revised and enlarged. Shakespeare, after having sketched out a play on the fashion of his youthful taste and skill, returned in after years to enlarge it, remodel it and enrich it with the matured fruits of years of observation and reflection. *Love's Labor Lost* first appeared in print with the announcement that it was "newly corrected and augmented." It is now very generally regarded as a revision of a play which Shake-

speare had produced ten years before and named *Love's Labor Won*. *Cymbeline* was an entire *rifacimento* of an early dramatic attempt, showing not only matured fullness of thought but laboring intensity of compressed expression. This being the fact, it is clear that Shakespeare treated his dramas as Guido did the *Cleopatra* he would not let leave his studio till ten years after the non-artistic world had deemed that portrait finished. Just as, during those ten years, the painter was penciling his canvas with curious touches, each approximating some fraction nearer his ideal—so the poet sought to find out acceptable words, or what he terms “an army of good words.” He poured his new wine into new bottles, and never was at rest till he had arrayed his ideas in that fitness of phrase which comes only by inspirations. Had he survived fifty years longer I suppose he would to the last have been, like Plato, perfecting his phrases.

His manner in diction was progressive, and this progress has been deemed so clearly

traceable in his plays that it can enable us to determine their chronological order, says Dryden, treating of Caliban: "His language is as hobgoblin as his person. In him Shakespeare not only found out a new character, but devised and adapted a new manner of language for that character." And so, with his fools, in showing forth their minutest follies he works by wit and not by witchcraft.

The result of Shakespeare's curious verbal felicity, is—that while other authors satiate and soon tire us—his speech forever breathes an indescribable freshness.

"Age cannot wither nor custom stale  
His infinite variety."

In the last line I have quoted there is a once used word, but I think it is a word which you would hardly guess. It is the last word,—namely, "variety."<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Though this instance [*Ant. and Cleop.* ii, 2, 241] is the only occurrence of *variety* in the plays, we meet the word once more in Shakespeare's poems, namely, in the twenty-first line of *Venus and Adonis*.

Making them red and pale with fresh variety.  
Not a few other words which appear once only in

In order to make sure of the thing he refused to repeat the word. Indeed, he calls iteration "damnable."

On every average page of Shakespeare you are greeted and gladdened by at least five words that you never saw before in his writings and that you will never see again: speaking once and then forever holding their peace,—each not only rare but a none-such—five gems just shown, then snatched away. Each page is studded with five stars, each as unique as the century flower, and like the night-blooming cereus

"The perfume and suppliance of a minute."

The mind of Shakespeare was bodied forth as Montezuma was appareled; whose costume, however gorgeous, was never twice the same, and so like Shakespeare's own "robe pontifical", ne'er seen but wondered at. Hence the Shakespearian style is fresh as morning dews and changeful as evening

the plays are also repeated in the poems. But it was the once used words in the plays, and not in other Shakesperian writings, of which it was my aim to treat,



clouds, so that we remain forever doubtful in relation to his manner and his matter, which of them owes the greater debt to the other.

The Shakespearian plots are analogous to the grouping of Raphael, the characters to the drawing of Michael Angelo, but the word painting exceeds the coloring of Titian. Accordingly, in view of Shakespeare's diction, I would long ago have said, if I could, what I read in Arthur Helps concerning a perfect style, that "there is a sense of felicity about it, declaring it to be the product of a happy moment, so that you feel that it will not happen again to that man who writes the sentence, nor to any other of the sons of men, to say the like thing so choicely, tersely, mellifluously and completely." In the central court of the Neapolitan museum I observed grape-clusters, volutes, moldings, fingers and antique fragments of all sorts wrought in the rarest marble, lying scattered on the pavement, exposed to sun and rain, cast down the wrong side up, and seemingly thrown away, as when the stones of the Jewish sanctuary

were poured out in every street. Nothing reveals the sculptural opulence of Italy like that apparent wastefulness. It seems to proclaim that Italy can afford to make nothing of what would elsewhere be judged worthy of shrines. We say to ourselves, "If such be the things she throws away, what must be her jewels!" A similar feeling rises in me while exploring Shakespeare's prodigality in once used words. His exchequer must have been more exhaustless than the Bank of England; and he threw away more dies for coining words than the British mint ever possessed for coining money.

The writer of the foregoing paper is very desirous to ascertain whether anything with the same special aim as this paper has been published, and if so, what and when. He earnestly hopes that what he has done for the single letter M. will be done by other Shakesperians one by one; or, far better, in combination—for all the letters of the alphabet. When this labor has been finished, a vantage ground for new Shakes-

pearian surveys will have been secured, and conclusions may thus become evident which cannot now be conjectured. If any club shall undertake this verbal investigation, let it be determined in the outset whether the different forms of a word,—its changes in spelling, number, part of speech, and conjugation shall each be deemed a separate word,—or shall be counted as one. The author regrets that he had no settled opinion on this point when he began the present article. Hence the statistics of vocabularies he has given differ considerably from those in G. P. Marsh and other writers.

White is whitest on black. Accordingly, the riches of Shakespeare as to its use "once for-all" of a world of words, would be tenfold more conspicuous could we contrast him in this regard with other writers, and especially with his contemporaries. But, for this end to be fully reached, statistical materials are wanting: for no concordances, it is believed, exist of Shakespeare's fellow-dramatists. Is there no admirer of Marlowe, or Ben Jonson, who will

do for his favorite such a labor of love as Mary Cowden Clarke during sixteen years did for her's? After all, every reader of the Elizabethan playwrights must have been struck with their lack of once-used words which so abound in Shakespeare. On the other hand, their fancy for "favorite sons," pet words lugged in by the ears when they ought to have been cast out into outer darkness, has forced itself on the attention of every student. Let us see right early, from some one familiar with the old dramatists, the difference,—the contrast—heaven-wide in this particular—between the lesser lights and the one great light. So shall it be best demonstrated that he surpassed them all as the day the night.



"In brief, sir, study what you most affect."

*Taming of The Shrew, I. 1.*

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